



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

- 1. DNR funding helps local projects improve water quality in 2005**
- 2. DNR accepting applications for water quality project funding**
- 3. Five counties signed up to evaluate animal confinement sites**
- 4. EPA approves 2004 standards for cold-water streams**
- 5. DNR to answer phosphorus, nutrient questions at Pork Congress**
- 6. Silver Lake residents asked for input on water quality improvement plan**
- 7. Residents asked for input on plan to improve Beeds Lake**

DNR FUNDING HELPS LOCAL PROJECTS IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN 2005

DNR provides \$5.2 million to 52 local and statewide water quality projects

NOTE TO EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: Please note the additional news release, which follows this, regarding applying for 2006 water quality project funding.

DES MOINES — In 2005, Iowans came together to protect and improve the water in their own backyards, along with some help from the DNR.

The DNR funded 52 projects that helped address agricultural and urban nonpoint pollution issues in streams and lakes across the state. These projects are working to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients, chemicals and bacteria reaching Iowa's waters. Nonpoint source pollution occurs when rainfall or snowmelt washes pollutants from agricultural or urban areas into lakes, rivers and groundwater.

The DNR provided approximately \$5.2 million to these projects during fiscal year 2005. Many of the projects address problems in streams and lakes included on Iowa's impaired waters list by promoting farming practices that reduce the impact agriculture has on Iowa's natural resources. The projects also work to reduce the impact of nonpoint

pollution from urban areas, through practices such as stormwater controls and lawn care management.

“We’re seeing successes in many of these projects, and the common thread is local community involvement,” said Ubbo Agena, coordinator of the DNR’s nonpoint program. “Local leadership and participation are the keys to making these projects work. These Iowans are enthusiastic about working together to improve their lakes and streams.”

One project, at Lake Darling in southeast Iowa, is finding success as it works to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients and bacteria entering the lake. Partnerships between the project, DNR, landowners and other groups have been key, according to Stan Simmons, coordinator of the watershed project at Lake Darling.

“Lake Darling is a tremendous public resource and it’s worth saving and protecting,” Simmons said. “Without partnerships with various groups and landowners, you can’t do what needs to be done. We’ve certainly felt blessed with the funding from the DNR.”

Successes were also seen this year at Nine Eagles Lake and Slip Bluff Lake in Decatur County, where improvements in water quality led to both lakes coming off the state’s impaired waters list. With the construction of small basins and ponds, the amount of sediment reaching Nine Eagles Lake was reduced by 85 percent, while sediment reaching Slip Bluff Lake was reduced by 64 percent. With less sediment reaching the lakes, water clarity also improved.

The improved water quality has in turn improved fishing and other recreation at the lakes, increasing park use at Nine Eagles State Park, according to Park Manager Bud Taylor.

“It seems like we get more people to come out swimming and the fishing has gotten better too,” Taylor said. “Before, heavy rains would muddy up the water with silt and it would take weeks to clear up. Now, the water quality is really great – you can see six to eight feet down and the water plants really benefit from it.”

Results showing the reduction of pollutants during 2005 from DNR-funded watershed projects will be available in mid-February.

DNR grant funding for nonpoint pollution programs is made available through the Section 319 program of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

For more information, contact Ubbo Agena at (515) 281-6402.

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**DNR ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR WATER QUALITY
PROJECT FUNDING**

DES MOINES — Projects aimed at improving Iowa's water quality can now apply for 2006 funding from the DNR.

Applications for fiscal year (FY) 2006 Section 319 funding from the DNR must address nonpoint source pollution problems that are adversely affecting Iowa's water quality. Nonpoint source pollution occurs when rainfall or snowmelt washes pollutants into lakes, rivers and groundwater. While most projects will be watershed-based, projects may also be designed to address problems on a statewide, regional or county basis.

Pre-applications, which are optional, are due by Feb. 1. Pre-applications allow a project to obtain DNR review and comment before developing a full application. Final project applications are due by April 14.

Of the funding DNR will receive from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for FY 2006, priority will be given to projects addressing water bodies included on the state's list of impaired waters. Watershed projects receiving funding will be required to report on reductions in sediment and nutrient delivery achieved from project activities, such as implementation of conservation practices. FY2006 funds will likely be available to projects in January 2007.

Some changes have been made to this year's application materials. More information is available on the DNR Web site at www.iowadnr.com/water/nonpoint/app2.html.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through its Section 319 program, provides grant funds to states to implement nonpoint source pollution control programs and projects. In Iowa, the designated lead agency for the 319 program is the DNR.

For more information, contact Ubbo Agena at (515) 281-6402 or Becky Schwiete at (515) 242-6196.

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FIVE COUNTIES SIGNED UP TO EVALUATE ANIMAL CONFINEMENT SITES

DES MOINES – Five Iowa counties have formally adopted a resolution to use the master matrix in evaluating the proposed sites of animal confinements.

Other counties have until Jan. 31 to adopt the resolutions and submit them to the DNR for use during the remainder of 2006 and January of 2007.

“For counties that adopt the master matrix, this is an opportunity to have input on site selection, the type of structures and manure management being proposed,” said Gene Tinker, coordinator of the DNR animal feeding section.

Counties that are interested can find a model construction evaluation resolution and additional information on the Iowa State Association of Counties Web site at <http://www.iowacounties.org/>.

Producers in counties that file the resolutions must meet higher standards than other permitted sites. They must earn points on the master matrix by choosing a site and using practices that reduce impacts on the environment and the community.

Counties that have adopted a resolution should mail it to Tammie Krausman at the DNR, 502 East Ninth Street, Des Moines, IA 50319 or fax it to 515-281-6794. Sign-ups occur annually during the month of January.

Most confinement feeding operations that need to apply for a permit are subject to the matrix. For more information on which operations are affected, check the DNR Web site under animal feeding operations at www.iowadnr.com.

Eighty-six counties filed resolutions in 2004. Eighty-seven counties filed resolutions in 2003, the first year that the master matrix was in effect.

For more information, contact Tammie Krausman at (515) 281-8382.

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EPA APPROVES 2004 STANDARDS FOR COLD-WATER STREAMS

DES MOINES — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the DNR's revised water quality standards for cold-water streams. The DNR can now apply those standards, which it adopted in December 2004.

Water quality standards are the cornerstone for many DNR programs. The standards define uses for rivers, streams and lakes and determine what the level of water quality should be for each water body. Some standards are designed to provide safe drinking water, some to protect aquatic life and wildlife, and some to ensure safe recreational uses for the public, such as swimming.

The revised standards protect certain aquatic life, such as trout, which need cold-water conditions to survive. The standards include a new process for determining which streams should be protected for cold-water uses. The revised standards also define two classifications, instead of one, to reflect the different uses by cold-water aquatic life.

“These standards will help us decide what streams need to be protected as a cold-water stream,” said Chuck Corell, head of the DNR's water quality bureau. “As we use the new process, we know that streams – and the aquatic life that lives in those streams – will have the appropriate level of protection.”

The DNR's Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) must approve the change of a stream's classification to a cold-water use. In addition, the DNR will ask the EPC later this month to approve proposed changes to the DNR's warm-water standards.

After receiving public comments, the DNR submitted the 2004 revised water quality standards to the EPA in February 2005 for approval. States are required to review their water quality standards at least every three years and submit new or revised standards to the EPA as detailed in the Clean Water Act.

For more information, contact Chuck Corell at (515) 281-4582.

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DNR TO ANSWER PHOSPHORUS, NUTRIENT QUESTIONS AT PORK CONGRESS

DES MOINES – Animal confinement producers who have questions about how the phosphorus index will affect their confinement operation can talk to DNR specialists at the Pork Congress, Jan. 25 and 26.

The DNR will have nutrient and environmental specialists on hand to help producers answer their questions about state requirements for pork producers, particularly on the phosphorus index and manure application.

"It's really important to run the phosphorus index now so that producers know what they are facing and can plan ahead," said Jeremy Klatt, a nutrient specialist in the Mason City DNR field office.

"Producers who take this step now will have the time to add erosion controls or make management changes," he said. "Some producers will need to add conservation practices, adjust application rates or find additional land-application acres."

DNR specialists can help producers sort out requirements for using the phosphorus index in manure management plans, which already affect some producers and will gradually affect more starting in August of 2006.

Klatt added that each site is unique because of the topography and distance from a stream, soil phosphorus levels and existing conservation practices such as terraces all affect how much phosphorus moves off the land application fields.

The DNR's booth is number 1125 in the Hy Vee Hall at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines. Trade show hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Jan. 25 and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Jan. 26.

For more information, contact Karen Grimes at (515) 281-5135.

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SILVER LAKE RESIDENTS ASKED FOR INPUT ON WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DES MOINES – The DNR will present plans for improving water quality at Silver Lake in Worth County at a public meeting Jan. 10. The draft water quality improvement plan will be discussed at 6 p.m. at Kuennen's Quarry Park, located two miles south of Northwood on Highway 65, then east on 450th Street.

The draft plan, also known as a TMDL or Total Maximum Daily Load, has been developed for Silver Lake. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain water quality standards.

The water quality improvement plan also includes information on how water quality can be improved through conservation efforts in the watershed, or the surrounding area that drains into the lake. After receiving public comments, the draft plan will be forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

The water quality problems at Silver Lake are related to algae and turbidity, or cloudy water, which are associated with excessive nutrient loading, especially from phosphorus. Sediment and nutrients in Silver Lake are coming from agricultural lands in the watershed and are also being stirred up from within the lake to cause water quality problems. Excess nutrients make the lake aesthetically objectionable and less desirable for uses like swimming, but do not pose a specific human health threat.

Comments on the draft plan will be received through Feb. 3. Copies of the draft plan are available from the following sources, which can also be used to submit comments:

- Internet: www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/tmdl/publicnotice.html
- E-mail chris.vangorp@dnr.state.ia.us
- Telephone: Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791
- Mail: Chris Van Gorp, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

For more information, contact Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791.

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RESIDENTS ASKED FOR INPUT ON PLAN TO IMPROVE BEEDS LAKE

DES MOINES – The DNR will present plans for improving water quality at Beeds Lake in Franklin County at a public meeting Jan. 19. The draft water quality improvement plan will be discussed in the basement meeting room at the First National Bank of Hampton, 211 First St. NW in Hampton, at 6:00 p.m.

The draft plan, also known as a TMDL or Total Maximum Daily Load, has been developed for Beeds Lake. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain water quality standards.

The water quality improvement plan also includes information on how water quality can be improved through conservation efforts in the watershed, or the surrounding area that drains into the lake. After receiving public comments, the draft plan will be forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

The water quality problems at Beeds Lake are related to high levels of E. coli, a bacteria that indicates untreated wastes from warm-blooded animals (humans, wildlife, livestock, birds) are in the water. In Beeds Lake, the E. coli has come from nonpoint sources throughout the watershed. Potential sources in the Beeds Lake watershed include treated wastewater, overland runoff from areas with wildlife and livestock, and leaking septic systems.

Comments on the draft plan will be received through Feb. 3. Copies of the draft plan are available from the following sources, which can also be used to submit comments:

- Internet: www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/tmdl/publicnotice.html
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